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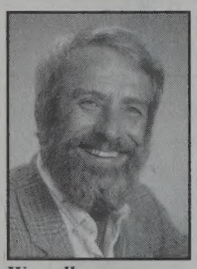
United Church Board for World Ministries Fall 1998, Vol. XXVIII, No. 2

Nine approved for overseas service

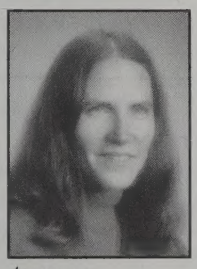
Nine persons were appointed for overseas service recently, two of them returnees.

Linda Ammons and **John Worrell**, recognized as Overseas Associates, went to the Middle East June 25 where they are working at the W.F. Albright Institute of Archaeological Research in Jerusalem. They will both serve one year as senior research fellows. Linda is an anthropologist and sociologist, and John is an archaeologist. They are members of First Congregational Church, Brimfield, MA.

The couple previously served from 1993-95 in the West Bank, arriving just at the time of the famous handshake between Yasir Arafat and Yitzhak Rabin, when peace appeared to be breaking out between the Israelis and the Palestinians.



Worrell



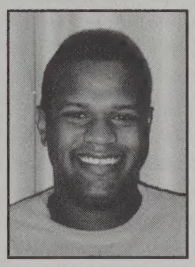
Ammons

At that time they co-authored *Letters from Palestine, email excerpts in an age of uncertainty*, a compilation of their observations of Israelis living in fear of the terrorism of Palestinian extremists, and of Palestinians watching helplessly as Israeli extremists confiscated more and more Palestinian land.

Donald and **Elizabeth Fox** began their one-year term as Associates with the Reformed Church of France in Bourges Sept. 1. Their appointment is part of a pulpit exchange with the French church, which has sent a pastor from Lillebone, France—Raphael Picon—to serve for a year at the church Donald pastors, St.

(continued on page 7)

Gourdet heads WOA



Gourdet

Nicolas Gourdet, program associate in the Global Ministries Africa Office, was elected president of the Washington Office on Africa (WOA) this spring.

The WOA lobbies and does advocacy work related to Africa on Capitol Hill representing Protestant churches, Roman Catholic orders and several labor unions.

Gourdet assumes the presidency of WOA at a critical time. A new executive director, the Rev. Leon Spencer of the Episcopal Church, began his work July 1. The organization moved its offices to the Lutheran Church of the Reformation on Capitol Hill, and is considering new program directions in Africa advocacy work.

During the anti-apartheid struggle WOA was considered by many to be the key organization in Washington, D.C., providing effective strategies and information. In recent years, the organization has focused on human rights in Nigeria, democratic forces in the Congo, and trade issues involving Africa.

Ziebell retires from Europe office

The Rev. Kenneth R. Ziebell, executive for Europe, retired Sept. 1. Ziebell joined the UCBWM staff in 1982 after having served overseas for 22 years.

The Global Ministries Europe Office has since been consolidated with the Middle East Office in New York. Oversight of that office is with Dale L. Bishop.

Ziebell will continue in a consulting role on ecumenical relationships in western Europe including the Evangelical Church of the Union, Germany; the United Reformed Church in England; the Reformed Church of France; the Waldensian Church, Italy; and the Reformed Church of Hungary. He will also assist in monitoring situations in eastern Europe, and with editorial responsibilities with *gear* magazine.

Ziebell was awarded an honorary doctorate degree from Elmhurst College, Elmhurst, IL, this year in recognition of his many years of mission work.

Opportunity

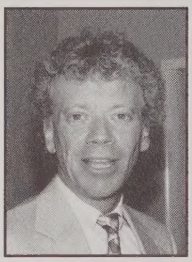
A travel seminar to Hong Kong and China through the Plowshares Institute is being offered in 1999. Application deadline for the trip (June 1–14) is April 1, 1999.

Participants will examine results of the 1997 return of Hong Kong to Chinese sovereignty and the impact on human rights, economic changes and Christianity within China. For an application and additional information contact Plowshares at P.O. Box 243, Simsbury, CT 06070, phone 860/651-4304, or fax 860/651-4305.

The 1999 model...

Readers can expect a new look in 1999, when we begin joint publication with Disciples Global Ministries colleagues, combining *Whole Earth Newsletter* with the Disciples' publication *good news*.

Message From the Staff



For Jubilee 2000

Let the trumpet blow . . .

By Terry Provance, Executive for World Ministries in the U.S. and Canada

Newspaper soaked in squalid water equals baby food. You may find that statement as outrageous as the one which describes ketchup as a vegetable. Sadly, both are true.

It was while living in South America in the 1980's and reading an article about Peru's opposition to paying its external debt that I learned of a poor mother who had nothing to feed her child except newspapers soaked in water.

Today, a decade later, the poorest nations of the world owe to the richest governments and banks over $2 trillion in foreign debt. For every $1 given as aid to poor countries today, $9 comes back in debt service. It's no wonder many view the current international debt crisis as a modern form of bondage and slavery.

After centuries of exploitation and colonialism by Europe and the U.S., the wealthier nations of the world continue to force poor countries into a global market economy which exacerbates the unequal and unjust relations between the North and the South. And though there is plenty of blame to go around—including irresponsible creditors and corrupt borrowers—the bottom line is that governments of impoverished countries are servicing their enormous debts (which, incidentally, created very little benefit) by diverting limited resources from meeting basic human needs of their people.

In order to create a fairer playing field in the international global market and to cease the unjust balance of debt payments, groups all over the world are uniting in order to call for debt relief. National campaigns in over 50 countries are combining their efforts into a Jubilee 2000 Campaign—demanding that national governments, multilateral lending institutions and commercial banks cancel their debts to poor countries in the spirit of jubilee by the end of the millenium. Together, they are pressuring the IMF, the World Bank, G8 governments and others to cancel the debts which were egregiously promoted and irresponsibly utilized.

Jubilee is a Hebrew scripture value (Lev. 25:10). Its practice meant to restructure injustices that would occur within the human community. Every 50 years slaves would be freed, landed property returned to rightful owners and outstanding debts cancelled. In this way more acceptable and fairer relationships could be maintained and justice preserved.

Today there are debt relief campaigns throughout the world as well as one in the U.S. which began in June 1997 and staffs an office in Washington, D.C. Although the language of jubilee does not speak to all faith traditions (nor does it always speak clearly to people outside religious constituencies) the language of debt bondage, injustice and greed rings worldwide. The widening rich-poor gap between the North and South is ringing alarms everywhere...and so the trumpet for jubilee should blow. And while the campaign includes significant participation by religious organizations, it is not limited to institutions and persons with a religious perspective. The common ground is a moral commitment to debt cancellation for poor countries.

Just as people of faith and others around the world united to end racial apartheid in South Africa, today we must end the global apartheid of economic injustice, one form of which is the long-standing and painful Third World debt, payment of which is still sought by wealthy nations and banks.

The Jubilee 2000 Campaign seeks a new ethical and moral vision as an expression of hope to rectify social and economic inequalities. In the U.S., local campaigns are being formed across the country and a variety of activities are underway. An ambitious petition drive has begun, resolutions before city councils and other organizations are being passed, new legislation is about to be introduced into Congress and demonstrations are planned for the World Bank and IMF in Washington, DC. Excellent educational and audio-visual resources are available, and a nationwide strategy has been strengthened as a result of a recent exuberant gathering in early October. Given the international scope of this movement, advocacy efforts can be coordinated throughout the world for maximum effectiveness.

Leaving . . .

It was with deep regret that I must advise *Whole Earth Newsletter* readers that Helen Hayes, who has served as Managing Editor since 1991, will be leaving the UCBWM. In response to continuing budget pressures as well as the combining of this newsletter with the Disciples' *good news* in 1999, her position is being eliminated.

I wish to publicly thank Helen for the good work she has done editing *Whole Earth Newsletter* and in other capacities in the Mission Education & Interpretation Office. Her skills and dedication will be missed.

-Sandra Rooney

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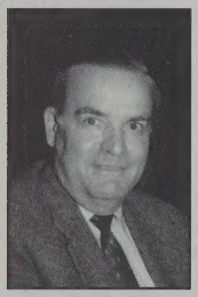
Around the Region

Dreaming of peace in the Balkans and throughout the World

By Kenneth R. Ziebell, former Europe Executive Secretary



After Europe suffered through the ravaging destruction of two world wars in this century and then survived four decades of cold war, with the continent split politically and living under the threat of nuclear annihilation, it appeared that the collapse of communism in 1989 offered an ideal opportunity to move in a new direction of cooperation and universal progress. Indeed this promised peace, and prosperity flourished in many parts of Europe, but in other areas the decade of the 1990s turned sour, introducing its own scourge—a narrow nationalism which placed loyalty to small ethnic or religious groups above the common good and any wider cooperation. The resulting devastating conflicts have become familiar elements of our daily news—from Chechnya to Georgia to former Yugoslavia, where fighting continues today in the formerly autonomous province of Kosovo.

These conflict situations are rooted in Europe's history of wars, movements of peoples, changing centers of power, and ever changing political boundaries, with the inevitable result that in many cases communities of one ethnic or religious group are living in territory governed by another. Reading history selectively, it is not difficult for any national or religious group to identify events in which it has suffered injustice as the victim of a neighboring group. Historically, most Europeans facing this situation have (whether happily or not) accepted the setting their history has brought them. The 1990s have been different, however, and inter-communal tensions have turned to disastrous conflicts.

". . .political leaders who recognized that they would never attain as much personal power in a larger unit as they possessed in their own small group."

It is ironic that this new trend of divisiveness and hostility has advanced simultaneously with the outstanding success of Europe's political/economic integration in the European Union (EU). It was widely expected that vestiges of historic narrow group rivalries would become submerged in common loyalty to a much larger entity, in which every ethnic or religious group is in a sense a minority but likewise every group reaps valuable benefits as part of the larger whole. The reasons for some groups' disqualifying themselves from the rich benefits of integration by seeking instead to avenge their alleged historic victimization by their neighbors would need to be examined on a case-by-case basis. But at least part of the explanation lies in the self-serving greed of individual political leaders who recognized that they would never attain as much personal power in a larger unit as they possessed in their own small group; they then used the ploy of alleged historic victimization by hostile neighbors to convince their followers that violent retaliation was justified to undo the alleged wrong.

A happy exception to this pattern appeared in 1998 in the inter-communal relationship in Northern Ireland. As in other cases, here, too, each community could allege historic victimization by the other. But the crucial turning point was the public expression by majorities of people in each community that for them living in a peaceful, cooperative, successful society is a greater benefit than securing revenge for alleged past injustices. With that popular outcry political leaders were compelled to accept an agreement in which both sides gave up positions to which they had previously been unalterably committed. There remain extremists willing to use any means to sabotage any peace agreement, but the will of the public is clear.

To the outside observer it is self-evident that a negotiated agreement requires compromise, the willingness to settle for something less than one's initial claims. For those involved it is a decision between two alternative values: whether it is preferable to live in peace and stability, or to wait for a solution with everything desired (which isn't going to happen anyway).

Unfortunately, in Kosovo, the conflict continues. Thankfully, in some other disputes compromise has been given a higher priority than confrontation. If that choice could be made ever more widely, then we could dream that one day peace will prevail not only in the Balkans and throughout Europe but throughout the world.

Celebrating 25th at ARI

Partners at the Asian Rural Institute (ARI) are celebrating 25 years of training activities for rural development this year. ARI's mission is helping people from developing countries become self-sufficient in food production. A highlight of the anniversary was a two-week tour in October beginning with the annual Harvest Thanksgiving celebration at ARI. Participants also visited an organic farming community and a pottery village.

ARI can be found on the world wide web at <www.ari.edu> and contacted via email at <ari@nasu-net.or.jp>.

ARI actually had its roots in the South East Asia Course at Tsurukawa Rural Seminary near Tokyo which predated ARI by 12 years. Major turning points in ARI history included moving to Nishinasuno, organic farming, seeking a 50-50 balance of women and men, and including Asians on staff. More recent changes include involvement in the environmental crisis, more involvement of rural women in all aspects of food production, and realizing anew the importance of grass roots participation.

Founder Tom Takami said grass roots is an overused phrase, with many people and organizations using the word "more and more today, like the IMF and World Bank people, but they are working at a macro level. That is why ARI has to continue to emphasize the importance of the grass roots people. These are the people, more than 50% of the world, who are getting all kinds of negative pressure from the few powerful people who use that word, but these are the suffering people who continue to support the human enterprise. ARI still has a good mission."

Sharing life, hope (recent OGHS grants)

Weather in South America receives One Great Hour of Sharing attention. Your OGHS dollars have been at work here, where floods have ravaged Argentina ($6,000) and fires ($3,500) and drought ($3,000) have proven destructive in Brazil. Unusually heavy rains and flooding in northern regions of Argentina displaced 75,000 people and affected nearly 300,000. In Roraima state, Brazil, food staples were distributed, wells built and water tanks installed.

El Nino wreaks havoc in U.S., too. The Ohio Emergency Response of the UCC was engaged in a wide variety of disaster activities including delivering clean-up kits by personal and rented truck and making contacts in affected counties. In Iowa, floods and tornadoes affected some 3,900 structures and caused an estimated $20 million damage to crops. Many counties were eligible for disaster assistance. Funds for the 1998 Spring and Summer Storms and Floods went to Illinois South ($10,000), Iowa ($5,000), Minnesota ($5,000) and Penn West Conferences ($2,000), as well as to Church World Service (CWS) for its 1998 Spring Storms and Floods ($15,000) and 1998 Summer Storms and Floods appeals ($5,000). Directed gifts have also been sent to Conferences and CWS for these disasters.

Kosovo suffering mitigated by OGHS. Fighting between Serbs and the Kosovo Liberation Army has caused a widespread humanitarian crisis in Kosovo and surrounding regions or countries. The UCC sent $10,000 to Action by Churches Together to aid the displaced in the region. Emergency food and non-food items are being provided to 5,000 internally displaced persons in Kosovo during a four-month period, and immediate life-sustaining assistance will be granted to persons of all ethnic groups displaced within Kosovo and Montenegro. Non-food aid of an emergency nature is also being supplied to refugees in northern Albania who have fled violence and civil unrest in Kosovo province.

Contributions at work in Sudan crisis. The UCBWM sent $25,000 to CWS to provide food and emergency aid. We are glad to report that though things remain difficult in Bahr al Ghazal famine has been avoided in the Blue Nile Province of that war-torn country. We are told the situation of children has improved a lot since the turn of the year, and aid workers agree that food aid (including protein-enriched biscuits for children) along with seeds and tools, has helped the population in Blue Nile change their situation for the better. Over the past year food, medicine, seeds and tools have been supplied to the area.

UCC responds to tidal wave in Papua New Guinea. The UCBWM sent $7,000 to CWS for survivors of the destructive tidal wave which killed at least 1,500 and displaced many more. The Papua New Guinea Council of Churches, an ecumenical group, is channeling assistance through the Catholic church, the predominant religious body on the island, which is supplying food, water, clothing and medicines to disaster survivors. Funding will go toward the purchase of emergency food supplies, clothing and water, and the assessment mission to the affected area, as well as to help fund future mitigation and preparedness efforts in the region and possible ecumenical efforts to resettle disaster survivors.

. . . large enough for all God's children

By Lourdes Garcia, UCC Child Sponsorship Administrator

In the two and one half years I have been administrator of the UCC Child Sponsorship Program, I have been moved to tears by people's generosity and compassion. I have also been pained and frustrated by the refusal of some adults to support children at risk because they are not Christian. Unfortunately, as adults we insist on visiting upon the children the barriers we have erected amongst ourselves.

As a child I never worried about Muslims or Buddhists, or fretted over the state of Christian-Muslim relations, or sought to convert other children to my faith. I did worry about other children going hungry around the world and, at my mother's urging, tried not to waste food. On Halloween I carried a little UNICEF container and collected money for the poor and sick children. I was both nervous and proud to be the letter "E" in an elementary school play about UNICEF. I remember that our class had a pen pal from India named after a Hindu god. Never once did it occur to me that many of the sick and poor children I was sharing my limited wealth with, or was busy writing to, were not Christian. I was too overwhelmed by their plight to consider that we might not be going to the same heaven.

As an adult, I am still overwhelmed by the plight of children around the world, and am unwilling to consciously limit the boundaries of God's realm. We cannot stop to scrutinize the religious background of the many children killed or maimed by land mines before we demand that these terrible weapons be banned. The religious background of homeless children or children kidnapped and sold into prostitution should not be criteria for Christians to demand justice and offer compassion.

"Let the little children come unto me. . . ."

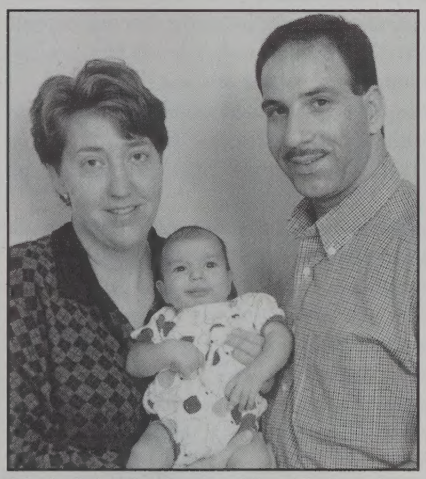
Our mandates were given to us a long time ago and affirmed repeatedly by Jesus, who taught and practiced love, compassion and forgiveness. When the disciples spoke sternly to the children being brought before him, Jesus said, "Let the little children come unto me, and do not stop them; for it is to such as these that the kingdom of heaven belongs" (Mat. 19:14).

It comforts me to know that the Creator's kingdom is large enough for all the children of the world.

CWS Hotline: 1-800/456-1310

How We See It From Here

Marla Schrader serves with the Applied Research Institute in Bethlehem, Israel/Palestine, documenting environmental degradation which has resulted from settlement and resource use policies of the Israeli government, particularly as it affects Palestinians. She also provides travel guidance for UCC and Disciples visitors. Last Advent Marla discovered that a young man named George, who occasionally worked for her father-in-law, was living on the outskirts of Bethlehem, sleeping on a piece of cardboard in one of the many limestone caves that dot the hillsides of Palestine. In April, she wrote a letter citing the significance of caves for the peoples of the Holy Land not only in the Christmas and Easter seasons but all year round.



Marla Schrader, husband Leo Hosh and son Jonathan

Due to the different church calendars, Christmas season in the Palestinian Christian community is spread out over three weeks to include the Protestants, Catholics, Orthodox and Armenians. I welcome this change of pace which allows for the necessary time to walk from house to house, visiting relatives and friends. The emphasis lies in a season of renewing and deepening relationships, not just one day of opening presents. Often when we visit homes, I have noticed that a handmade papier-mache cave is placed under the Christmas tree with an olive wood nativity scene inside. It struck me that, while many Western Christians grow up with the image that Jesus was born in a warm wooden barnhouse, Palestinian Christians who live among the same geological formations as did Jesus understand the significance of and protection provided to the Christ Child by natural caves.

Throughout the Advent and Christmas seasons, I wrote a case study regarding the demolition of Palestinian homes by the Israeli Army. This case was a bit different from others, as it involved a semi-Bedouin community in the southern Hebron hills of the West Bank—a community who resides primarily in caves. House demolitions are a particularly cruel practice of the Israeli military occupation. In this particular case, Israel had decided to ethnically cleanse the area in an apparent attempt to clear land for Israeli colonial expansion and to claim as much land as possible to be exclusively theirs before the final status peace negotiations. To this end, many of the caves in which this community lived were destroyed by the bulldozers. Several of the families have documents stating that their families have lived in these caves since the Ottoman Empire (1516-1917 CE).

Last month we celebrated the feast of the icon at the Greek Catholic Church in Bethlehem. The priest invited us to look around at one another and recognize that our sisters and brothers are the true icons—the true windows to God. I noticed more closely the two icons on either side of the altar. To the left hung the icon of the nativity with Mary resting in the cave after having given birth to Jesus. To the right hung the icon of the Anastasis with Christ who has descended the afterlife, breaking out of the caves which surrounded him.

This week we will color Easter eggs in the manner that Palestinian Christians have used for centuries. We will boil them with onion skins to attain a deep burnt orange color. The first eggs will be eaten when the congregation gathers after the Easter service. Each person cracks their egg against the end of someone else's egg as a symbol of the resurrection—of the breaking open of the caves in our lives which both offer shelter and lead us to new life.

The same caves of Palestine which offered the newborn Jesus and his mother warmth and protection 2,000 years ago continue to provide shelter for people like George. They also continue to provide shelter for the semi-Bedouin community in the Hebron Hills who, despite the greed which destroyed their homes, have cleaned out the rubble and non-violently defied the bulldozers by moving back into their caves, maintaining a resilient spirit and standing steadfast in hope and faith.

Jan Engsberg is a visiting professor in the Department of Journalism and Communication at Xiamen University, People's Republic of China, and has served in China for 12 years. In a recent letter she responded to friends' inquiries about what has kept her there for so long—not a part of her original plan. Although she cites support from colleagues, appreciative students, attraction to Chinese culture and fascination with that country, she said it is also the people she sees daily who are "almost nameless, nearly anonymous to most of us even though we encounter them in familiar places. . . ."

It's The Shoe Repair Lady whose face lights up when I stand by her modest shop to chat while waiting for a city bus. She and her husband have been in Xiamen just a few months longer than I, seeking a better life than would be possible in the countryside. Their two children are growing up with grandparents back home, where they can afford to return once a year. We've shared our happiness and our worries. She gets my award for having the most winning smile.

It's The Market Sweeper, a young man whose family had farm land which is now occupied by the campus. He is diligent in his sweeping, yet always looks up from his broom and never fails to give me a broad, toothy smile. He never says much, but always recognizes me in his own way and delights with my conversations, kept going by his approving nods and occasional comments. (*Jan also names a "Street Walker," "The Fruit Sellers" and "The Banana Lady" as among her special friends.)*

That's why I'm still here. It's these nearly nameless friends who bring lightness of being, regardless of the daily struggles and busyness, who care in simple, uncomplicated, undemanding ways, who do what they each one can to contribute to the sense of belonging I find here, even though my foreignness is what it is.

Issue Perspective:

Speaking at General Synod 19 in St. Louis in 1993, Archbishop Desmond Tutu surprised many delegates. Instead of focusing his remarks on the evils of South African apartheid, he described the human costs of Africa's crushing debt to international funding agencies. In calling for the cancellation of Africa's debt, Tutu gave Synod delegates firsthand exposure to sub-Saharan Africa's pain under unjust international economic structures and procedures.

Five years have lapsed since Tutu's memorable speech. During that period, the extent and impact of Africa's debt have worsened considerably. Counting 20 of the world's poorest 30 nations, Africa struggles under the burden of more than $323 billion, owed primarily to international financial institutions such as the International Monetary Fund (IMF) and to other governments. African countries now spend more scarce financial resources repaying this debt than they allot to education and health resources for their own populations.

". . .required to reduce subsidies to health and education. . ."

In fact, under World Bank- and IMF-imposed structural adjustment programs aimed at making African countries actors in the global market economy, African governments are required to reduce subsidies to health and education in order to wipe out deficits in financial dealings with other countries and to balance government budgets.

The Africa Office of Global Ministries frequently is called upon by partner denominations and councils of churches to fill the gap left by withdrawn government subsidies to church-run hospitals and schools. During the past few years, partners in the Peoples Republic of Congo, Kenya, Zambia and Zimbabwe have sent urgent appeals for assistance with teachers' salaries and the upgrading of deteriorating school and hospital buildings.

". . .children bearing the impact of their countries' debts."

As schools and hospitals lose government subsidies, they increase fees beyond the ability of most already poor African families to pay. This means that in some hard-hit countries an entire generation of children is largely kept unschooled. These children are bearing the impact of their countries' debts. They are vulnerable to life-threatening illnesses such as measles because their parents were unable to pay for early childhood vaccinations.

Ironically, many of the loans that are being repaid were made to corrupt, non-elected African governments under the rubric of "development assistance." Most of these loans never benefitted the grass roots. They benefitted the head of state and his entourage directly, or went into prestige projects far removed from the survival bread-and-butter concerns of most Africans. Probably the best known case of such "kleptocracy" was that of the late President Mobutu Sese Seko of Zaire (now the Democratic Republic of Congo).

It is not surprising that most Africans ask why they should shoulder the burden of debt repayment when they never benefitted from the loans in the first place, and when the loans were often made to dictatorial, non-representative regimes.

The wealthy G-7 countries, the IMF and the World Bank have come under increasing pressure to cancel the debts of Africa's poorest countries. They have devised the Heavily Indebted Poor Country (HIPC) Initiative. Under this initiative, the levels of debt which each country can sustain and repay are individually analyzed and assessed by their creditors. The creditors then share the costs of canceling the remaining "unsustainable," or unpayable, debt. The debts in question are commercial, bi-lateral (i.e., those between two governments) and multi-lateral (i.e., those between a government and the World Bank, the IMF and regional development banks).

". . .only Uganda . . .only partial."

So far 20 countries have been assessed as HIPC's and are designated for debt relief. But because of numerous requirements before the relief becomes effective, the Initiative will not become operational until the year 2000. To date only Uganda has received any debt cancellation under the plan, and this was only partial.

While African nations have appreciated the HIPC Initiative as recognition by the multilateral agencies that African indebtedness is out of control, they say, effectively, that it represents too little, too late.

A number of voices are now advocating cancellation of all debts. Some analysts justify complete cancellation of debt on the common-sense basis that the current debt is so vast that it is impossible to repay. They ask how Africa can embark upon just, participatory and sustainable development while carrying the burden of massive, perpetual indebtedness.

A number of partners of the United Church of Christ and the Disciples of Christ in Africa are focusing sharply on debt cancellation as their number one priority issue at the end of the nineties. One example is the Christian Council of Zambia (CCZ), Zambia's main ecumenical body. On August 7, 1998, the CCZ was joined on the steps of the Anglican Cathedral of the Holy Cross in Lusaka by representatives of the Zambia Episcopal Conference (Roman Catholic) and the Evangelical Fellowship of Zambia to launch the "Cancel Zambia's Debt" Campaign.

". . .bonds of community were restored. . ."

Anticipating the new millennium, in a written statement the church leaders draw upon the Hebrew tradition of the jubilee year recorded in Deuteronomy 15 and Leviticus 23. The jubilee year was a time when the broken bonds of community were restored through setting slaves free, redistributing land, and canceling debt.

The church leaders state: "Of special relevance to the people of Zambia today is the call for the canceling of debt. As we are all aware, Zambia suffers heavily under an immense burden of external debt. Over $7.1 billion is owed to donor countries and to international financial institutions such as the World Bank and the IMF. That amounts to a debt of US$750 for every man, woman and child in Zambia!"

Cancel Africa's debt now!

". . .not asking for debt 'forgiveness.'"

The church leaders assert that only through cancellation will it be possible for Zambians to "break the chains of debt and have a fresh start, a new beginning, to celebrate the new millennium." They go on to clarify that "we are not asking for debt 'forgiveness.' To receive 'forgiveness' is to acknowledge guilt. But Zambia has been, with considerable diligence and sacrifice, meeting its debt service. Our incurring of debt has not primarily been our fault, and hence 'forgiveness' is not the proper word to use. Rather, we ask for 'cancellation' of an unpayable burden that is harming our people very much. It is not charity that we are seeking, but justice!"

The statement also calls upon international church partners such as Global Ministries to lobby at home for equitable and effective debt relief.

". . .knowledgeable. . .concerning economic dynamics."

African church leaders are speaking loudly for debt cancellation because their constituents are impacted daily by the consequences of indebtedness. I am often surprised at how knowledgeable average African church members are concerning economic dynamics. They know what structural adjustment policies represent in their local context, and they are able to connect their own economic situation to these policies. Even though many persons cannot read or write, they are economically literate. It is for this reason that economic justice is the most volatile issue in all sub-Saharan African countries.

Daniel Hoffman, Area Executive
Global Ministries Africa Office

Action suggestion

United Church of Christ individuals and congregations wishing to act in solidarity with Africans and others advocating debt cancellation should contact Jubilee 2000/USA, which characterizes itself as "part of a world-wide movement to cancel the crushing debt of impoverished countries by the new millennium.

Contact Jubilee 2000/USA at 222 E. Capitol St., NE, Washington, D.C. 20003-1036, phone 202/783-3566, fax 202/546-4468, email <cood@j2000usa.org>, web <www.J2000USA.ORG/J2000>.

Global Ministries staff attending WCC Assembly

When the World Council of Churches 8th Assembly gathers in Harare, Zimbabwe, Dec. 3-14, under the theme "Turn to God...Rejoice in Hope," Global Ministries staff will be present.

Participating in the Assembly as observers or accredited visitors will be David Hirano, UCBWM Executive Vice President; Patricia Tucker Spier, President of the Division of Overseas Ministries, Disciples; Dale Bishop, Acting General Secretary for Mission Program, Global Ministries; Daniel Hoffman, Africa Office executive; Lawrence Burnley, Executive for Racial Ethnic Constituency Education and Development; and Alicia Nebot, Program Associate for Global Education and Advocacy. Nicolas Gourdet, Program Associate in the Africa Office, will attend as a youth steward.

Staff will share in the following activities—

- Plenaries and hearings on critical business for the WCC as it celebrates its 50th anniversary, including debate on a new Common Understanding and Vision document and the report to the WCC and the Vatican from the Joint Working Group between the Roman Catholic Church and the WCC (on which the Rev. Lee Ching Chee, CGMB Director from Hong Kong, is a member).
- A celebration of the recently concluded Ecumenical Decade of the Churches in Solidarity With Women.
- 400 workshops and artistic events on a wide range of social, cultural and theological topics in the Padare (Shona language for "meeting place").
- Exposure to African church concerns, especially the indebtedness of African countries. Participants will be exposed to the rich vitality of African liturgical expression.

The Global Ministries staff will also witness discussions related to difficult issues before the ecumenical community. These topics include continued membership and roles of the Orthodox Churches, some of which are threatening to leave, and the churches' response to homosexuality. The discussions on homosexuality may be particularly difficult given Zimbabwe's persecution of gays and lesbians over the past five years.

Overseas appointments *(continued from page 1)*

John's United Church of Christ in La Crosse, WI.

Bi-Sek Hsiao began a one-year term as an Associate teaching English at Payap University in Chiang Mai, Thailand, Oct. 15. A member of the Union Congregational Church, UCC, Montclair, NJ, she is serving through the Princeton-in-Asia Program.

Michelle Trites began work as a volunteer at Scott Memorial Hospital, Morija, Lesotho, Sept. 1. She will be working in the laboratory. Michelle is a member of the First Christian Church of Pittsburg, KS.

Gloria Wickwire began serving with the United Church in Jamaica and the Cayman Islands June 1. She is associate minister of the John Gray Memorial Church in Cayman. She received a three-year appointment as an Associate.

Katherine A. Goodspeed returned to Nanjing, China, Oct. 1. She was appointed to serve three more years through the Amity Foundation Education Program as consultant/advisor for Amity's English Teachers Program. She is a member of Parkhill Congregational Church, UCC, in Denver, CO.

Laslo Medyesy began three more years with the Reformed Church in Hungary on Oct. 1. A member of the United Church of Christ in Wallingford, CT, he serves as a professor of theology at the Gaspar Karoli Reformed University in Budapest.

Mission: every Christian's calling

By Alfred H. Jones, Steward for Mission Connection, UCC Stewardship Council

Last August, after serving for nine months as a Global Ministries Volunteer in France, I attended the re-entry conference for returning missionaries in Indianapolis. On the face of it, that seems pretty silly. Less than a year of overseas service (and in France, to boot!) shouldn't quality one to be considered a missionary.

I admit to being humbled by the experience of sitting in the same room with career personnel like Aiko and Tony Carter (Japan), Mark and Virginia Thelin (Taiwan) and Michael and Ruth Lockwood (India). My neophyte status didn't seem to bother them, however. They put me very much at ease. Still, I wondered if I wasn't traveling under false pretenses. I have since confirmed that my invitation to that conference wasn't a mistake. Rather, it represented the Common Global Ministries Board's acknowledgement of the changing shape of overseas mission.

". . .career missionaries . . .are now a vanishing breed."

What I discovered in Indianapolis is that the career missionaries we always took for granted are now a vanishing breed. Like a lot of changes today, that isn't good news. We're losing something very precious—our long-term missionaries gave mission a "face." In a sense, they were mission. But that's just the problem, although it's not their fault. We made them our surrogates.

Mission should be every Christian's calling. All of us should have our mission shoes in the closet, waiting to be put on. To be sure, many of us have family and professional obligations that prevent us from doing so...for now, at least. But in this day and time more of us really can find the ways and means to be short-term missionaries, if only we try. I like to think of Kate Goodspeed, who left a job with the telephone company to teach English in China.

But we're not trained, you reply. Well, look at me. I'm apparently worthless. What can a layperson with no expertise in the fields of, say, health or nutrition or agriculture contribute to God's mission? More than you realize.

". . .a ministry of accompaniment."

Mine was a ministry of accompaniment. It involved living out an ecumenical partnership by being present with our sisters and brothers in the Reformed Church of France—showing them by my companionship just how important that partnership really is. It was a ministry of communication and sharing, too. I learned a great deal about them, and also enjoyed telling them something about us. And now that I'm home, I can tell us about them. Believe it or not, that's mission.

I'm lucky. I have a spouse who was free to accompany me to France, and a boss who supported my decision. I'm also lucky because I had Ken Ziebell, who was then the Europe executive for Global Ministries. Anyone who thinks that if career missionaries are on the way out we can dispense with the mission board that used to send them is mistaken. I needed Ken, and all of his skills and contacts. Sure I had a vague idea of what I wanted to do. But Ken clarified it in discussions with me, then defined it in careful negotiations with his French counterparts. When I arrived in Paris our partners were ready for me, and there were no misunderstandings on either side. Furthermore, Ken kept in touch with me while I was abroad, helping me make the most of my experience.

And how do I rate that experience? Picture yourself at worship far from home in another culture. You feel out of place. Then the pastor rises and announces that all who believe in Jesus are welcome at the Lord's table. Can you imagine what that means to you, a stranger, a foreigner? Suddenly you realize that we all really are one—and that it is through contact with Christians around the world that we have the assurance that God is present with us wherever we go.

And you thought mission meant giving. It does. But it also means receiving.

Former staffer writes book

Susan C. Peacock, formerly UCBWM Global Education & Advocacy executive, has co-written a book, *In Search of Hidden Truths*, about human rights abuses in Honduras in the 1980's.

Peacock co-authored the book with Leo Valladares Lanza, National Commissioner for Human Rights in Honduras. Peacock is currently a Research Fellow at The National Security Archive in Washington, D.C., a non-profit library of declassified U.S. government documents. While writing the book she was on a MacArthur Fellowship.

The book is Valladares' second interim report on obtaining human rights information on the disappearance and presumed deaths of more than 184 people, including U.S. citizen Father James Francis Carney. The U.S. and Argentina were involved during that strife—the U.S. heavily involved in Honduran security operations during the Contra war against Nicaragua.

To order the book send $10 (includes s&h) payable to The National Security Archive, Attn. Susan Peacock, at the Gelman Library, Suite 701, 2130 H St. NW, Washington, D.C. 20037. Indicate English or Spanish version.

INTERFAITH DIALOGUE–Sixty-five UCC and Disciples members from 33 partnerships attended a national conference on global church partnerships in Cleveland in September convened by the World Ministries in the U.S. and Canada Program. A highlight of the gathering was an afternoon with Cleveland interfaith representatives, l-r: Hajj Haider Alawan (Islam), Gordas Sinah Das (Sikhism), Terry Provance (WMUSC executive), Shanat Kampani (Hinduism) and Peter Junger (Buddhism).

Sarajevo: healing hearts in hands of the people

By Linda Petrucelli, Executive, Global Sharing of Resources

It was my second trip to the former Yugoslavia and things certainly have changed. The desperation of war has been transformed into a fragile vision of peace. In Sarajevo, new high-rises and steel cranes now tower over a skyline dotted with mortar-shelled and collapsed buildings. Attitudes have changed, too. People quickly admit that the most brutal and violent fighting in Europe since World War II is behind them. "We need to stand on our own feet," so many say. Not an easy admission after years of waiting in bread lines and utter dependence for survival on humanitarian relief.

But healing is a slow and complex process. The conflicts accompanying the transition to a new economic order were only exacerbated by ethnic hostilities. The future of the elderly without pensions, the ill without adequate health care, and nearly 85% of the population unemployed, make the wounds of war that much more difficult to heal. The Nov. 22, 1995, signing of the Dayton Peace Accords may have produced a cease-fire, yet the tasks of peaceful reconciliation must address economic challenges as well as the direct results of the war—two million refugees, and the painful memories of the merciless slaughter of hundreds of thousands.

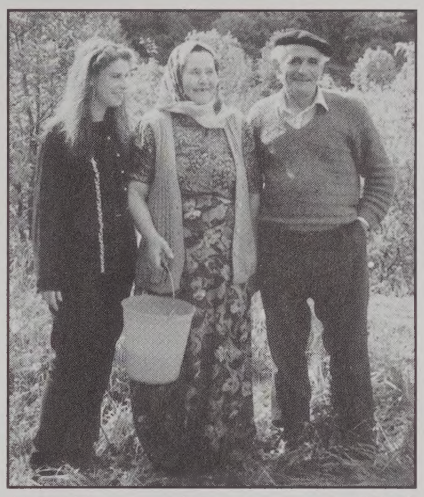
In the midst of this transition from war to peace and the reliance upon humanitarian assistance to self-supporting development, the United Church of Christ—through its support of the Church World Service Bosnia Program—is helping bring about a just and lasting recovery. At the offices of Merhamet, one of our local Muslim partners, I watch a line of women and children wait for parcels of cheese and milk and I am grateful for our UCC One Great Hour of Sharing Offering. OGHS funds recently provided $20,000 in support of a unique program which benefits war widows, orphans, the elderly and others still in need of food assistance in addition to stimulating the economy.

For the past two years, CWS has provided small cash grants for business proposals in the agricultural and light industry sectors. The entrepreneur negotiates to repay the assistance by contracting an in-kind product or service. In turn a local partner distributes the product or service—in this case milk and cheese—to vulnerable groups still in need of relief. CWS provides cash grants to purchase cows; this "moveable resource" is especially relevant to families who soon will be relocating. Similar micro-enterprise projects include chalk production, beekeeping, sewing, woodworking and egg production.

Amy Gopp, our Common Global Ministries Associate assigned to the Face to Face Dialogue Center, is directly engaged in activities aimed to bring about trust between people of different faith groups in postwar Bosnia. "It won't be the politicians, the government, the people at the top who bring about true reconciliation—healing is in the hands of the people," she says.

Amy's work at Face to Face includes the performance of religious music by an interfaith choir and the collection of "positive stories" where communities refused to act out hostilities upon their minority neighbors. She says what is needed is a rehabilitation of people's hearts through public lamentation, not fault-finding or accusations of blame.

As I sat in Sarajevo's Catholic Church, I was reminded of the relevance of Amy's words after I looked above the altar. High above me as I prayed, the central stained glass window displayed a suffering Jesus hanging from a cross. Just below the head of Christ, a gaping hole—no doubt the handiwork of snipers—let in a flood of sunshine. Gazing through the opening, I sensed a potent symbol of both the emptiness of war as well as the open future of peace. Suddenly a bird soared up to perch on the jagged edge of the hole where Christ's chest should have been, and as the tiny creature whirred its wings I imagined the beating of a forgiving and healing heart.



AMY GOPP (l) with Bosnian friends: "Healing is in the hands of the people."

Volunteers serving in overseas positions

Fourteen persons are serving or have served in short-term volunteer positions of various lengths overseas this year.

Paul Austin, Honduras, physician, Pilgrim UCC, Durham, NC.

William Collins, Namibia, Fellowship Church of God in Christ, Chesapeake, VA.

Russell Frazier, Nicaragua, agronomist, United Church of Christ, Midland, MI.

Howard Goodrich, Zimbabwe, administrator, First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Hannibal, MO.

Michael Johnson, South Africa, counseling trainer, Kellog Christian Church (Disciples), Kellog, IA.

David Lane, Nicaragua, English tutor, St. Paul UCC, Chelsea, MI.

Paul Ludwig, Nicaragua, entomologist, Homer United Methodist Church, Midland, MI.

Nancy Molin, Japan, First Congregational Church, UCC, Reno, NV.

Christy Newton, Costa Rica, First Christian Church (Disciples), Russellville, AR.

Dorothy and **Raymond Patch**, Northern Ireland, youth work, Mattapoisett Congregational UCC, Mattapoisett, MA.

Philip Reller, United Kingdom, Desert View UCC, El Paso, TX.

Elizabeth Horton Sheff, Italy, Warburton Community Congregational UCC, Hartford, CT.

Suzanne Stanfield, India, AIDS educator, Harvard Ave. Christian Church (Disciples), Tulsa, OK.

Jeffrey Wright, Israel/Palestine, Heart of the Rockies Christian Church (Disciples), Fort Collins, CO.

The IMF and the Asian Financial Crisis

By Gary Hoff, East Asia/Pacific Program Associate

Many political observers and economists believe the growing worldwide financial malaise is potentially the greatest threat to international stability since the end of WWII. Already, the Suharto regime in Indonesia has fallen after ruling the country for more than three decades with an iron fist. Russia is in social chaos. Recently prosperous Asian economies now face recession and bankruptcies. Like a medieval plague, the financial malady is now spreading to Brazil...and Wall Street.

In his book *The Globalization of Poverty*, Michel Chossudovsky, professor of economics at the University of Ottawa, identified the global crisis. "Humanity is undergoing in the post-Cold War era an economic crisis of unprecedented scale... The crisis is not limited to Southeast Asia or the former Soviet Union... This worldwide crisis. . .is more devastating than the Great Depression of the 1930s. It has far-reaching geo-political implications; economic dislocation has also been accompanied by the outbreak of regional conflicts, the fracturing of national societies and in some cases the destruction of entire countries. This is by far the most serious economic crisis in modern history."

The International Monetary Fund (IMF) has attempted to solve this crisis. Its strategy of sending billions in loans to ailing economies—accompanied by demands that recipient governments follow their "Structural Adjustment Policies" (SAPs) to remedy the situation—are viewed in the west as well-intended attempts to rescue foundering countries from self-inflicted financial chaos. But many economists question the IMF's altruistic motives; some go so far as to blame the IMF for its role in precipitating the crisis.

Walden Bello, co-author of *Dragons in Distress*, details the IMF's role in the crisis. Economies of Southern Asia—where the crisis began—were the victims of "fast-track capitalism." The IMF gave its blessings to plans of transnational banks to loan massive amounts of foreign capital to Asia's "economic tigers," tapping a share of their double-digit growth.

European, American and Japanese lenders aggressively competed with each other to make loans to local banks and real estate conglomerates, showing little concern for the soundness of their investments. The IMF, financed primarily by the investing countries, continued to praise the Southern Asian economies as showing a "consistent record of sound management policies."

But the dramatic influx of foreign funds helped overvalue local real estate markets. Banks soon found themselves overwhelmed by overpriced investments-ments. Feeding on each other's nervousness, banks started withdrawing their money.

The mercurial flow of international investment first propped up, then helped unravel the Asian economies. While the genesis of the crisis may have been irresponsible borrowing and spending habits of Asian financial institutions, the international banks' open purses helped transform a debt problem into an international financial crisis with global implications.

The scent of panic attracted currency speculators like George Soros, spurring drastic devaluations of local currencies. The situation soon mushroomed, resulting in a catastrophic combination of skyrocketing import bills, spiraling costs of servicing the private sector's foreign debt, unrealistic interest rates, and a rash of bankruptcies. The U.S. squelched a Japanese initiative to bail out Southern Asian economies using Asian funding, leaving the gates open for the IMF to step in.

According to economics Nobel laureate Milton Friedman, the standard IMF bailout demanding governments to curtail spending on subsidies and requiring higher taxes and interest rates are the wrong prescriptions for the crisis. In much of the region IMF austerity programs are doing great harm to the economies, causing needless suffering to ordinary people and threatening the fabric of society. "If there were no IMF," Friedman believes, "there would be no Asia problem. Maybe individual problems...but not a huge crisis throughout Asia."

The IMF has been accused of using the Asian turmoil to further its own agenda—and that of the U.S. Statements from U.S. Treasury Secretary Robert Rubin and IMF Director Michel Camdessus have become virtually indistinguishable. The IMF's SAP "reforms," especially removing restrictions to the flow of foreign capital in and out of Asian economies, promise a windfall of profits for U.S. lenders. Former trade representative Mickey Kantor stated that troubles of Asian economies should be seized as a golden opportunity for the West to "level the playing field" in Asia.

But perhaps the most troubling aspect of the IMF's role is that the "aid" loaned to these countries must be used to repay foreign debtors—subsidizing careless loans made by the same international banking institutions that played such a significant role in bringing about the crisis. Economists warn that the IMF's attempt to guarantee the repayment of foreign loans removes the cardinal economic principle of "moral hazard" from international banking: Those who make bad loans or poor investments should suffer the consequences. Instead, the IMF forces countries to curtail subsidies to its poorest citizens. The common people suffer the bailouts' financial hardships while global banks recoup their losses. This is not only unfair—it is immoral.

There is a move in the House of Representatives to refuse to rubber stamp additional billions in U.S. contributions to the IMF without first examining its SAPs and getting a guarantee of more transparency from the IMF. It currently operates under such a veil of secrecy no one knows who sits on its Board of Directors. House critics are also calling for an objective review of the effectiveness of IMF policies. By writing your representatives, raising the issue as they campaign for reelection and sharing your concerns about the IMF's role in the worldwide financial crisis you can help reform the fund and encourage new dialogue about how to solve this crisis justly.

Chronicle

HOME ASSIGNMENTS

Elvira Arndt, Ecuador, six months beginning July 1, 1998. (All dates following are starting dates.)

Mark Behle, Lesotho, six months, Dec. 1, 1999.

Paula Bidle and **George Moore**, Mexico, four months, Sept. 1, 1998.

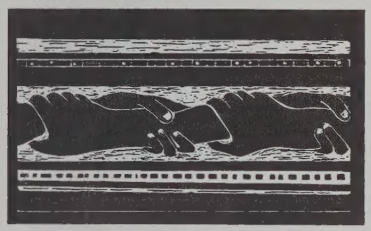
Andrea Cano, Mexico, six months, March 1, 1999.

(Continued on next page)

NEW RESOURCES: African debt, gifts of health, human rights, bulletin inserts

From CWS. . .

"Every child in Africa is born with a financial burden which a lifetime's work cannot repay. The debt is a new form of slavery as vicious as the slave trade."—All Africa Conference of Churches



"Africa: In Bondage to Debt" is a new addition to the Church World Service *Facts Have Faces* series. The six-page study/action resource explores the crushing impact of foreign debt on Africa's poorest nations, many of which spend more yearly on debt repayment than on primary education and health care combined. It profiles caring persons around the world who have joined the Jubilee 2000 Campaign to forgive the debt.

Copies are available at 30 cents each (4/$1) from CWS at P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515-0968. For bulk prices call 1-800/297-1516.

CWS' 1999 Calendar is now available. The 1999 version offers a vivid, front-line look at disaster relief and development efforts worldwide—from the slums of Mozambique where a seamstress stitches her way out of poverty and hunger to the back streets of Florida where a family grapples with homelessness. Twelve personal stories weave a compelling tribute to the power of good works and the strength of the human spirit.

For your copy contact CWS at P.O. Box 968, Elkhart, IN 46515. The $13 price includes shipping and handling. For credit card orders call 1-800/297-1516, Ext. 222.

Operation Medicine Box . . .

A mother walks for hours with a sick child in her arms to get help. When they arrive at the health clinic, health care personnel cannot treat the child because the necessary medicine is not available.

"Give the Gift of Health" is a brochure which explains a hands-on mission opportunity to help bring medicines to suffering peoples overseas. For years, U.S. pharmaceutical companies have donated medicines through the non-profit agency Interchurch Medical Assistance, Inc., (IMA) to overseas clinics and hospitals supported by the UCC. Despite this generosity many facilities lack the basic medicines and supplies to treat common illnesses or respond to disasters.

The UCC is participating in a program whereby over-the-counter products and financial gifts from churches are used by IMA to complete the purchase of medications that are not available through donations in order to meet requirements for medical box shipments that carry an average wholesale value of $4,500 and contain drugs and supplies sufficient to tend to common illnesses of 1,000 adults and children for three months. Average cost to participating churches is $165. For brochures or further information on the Medicine Box program contact the UCC's Office for Global Sharing of Resources, 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Floor, New York, NY 10115, phone 212/870-2283 or email <petrucel@ucc.org>.

Human rights ideas . . .

Another brochure is designed to help those planning activities in observance of the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights. It contains ideas for conversation starters at all kinds of church groups. Brochures may be ordered from the Office for Global Education and Advocacy, 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Fl., New York, NY 10115, email <nebota@ucc.org>.

From the MEI Office . . .

Also available are Global Ministries Country Bulletin Inserts—a description of the partnerships, missionaries, prayer concerns and statistical information in more than 30 countries where Global Ministries is working—are now available. Write the UCBWM Mission Education/Interpretation Office at 700 Prospect Ave., 6th Floor, Cleveland, OH 44115-1100, fax 216/736-3259, or email <colvins@ucc.org>.

Chronicle *(continued)*

Ann and **David Click**, Lesotho, four months, June 1, 1999.

Hyo-Jung Kim, Korea, six months, Jan. 1, 1999.

Sheela and **Sunny Kuruvilla**, Lesotho, six months, July 1, 1999.

Kristen Lee, South Africa, six months, Jan. 1, 1999.

Betsy and **Jim Lehman**, India, four months, Aug. 1, 1999.

Lillian Moir, Namibia, six months, Jan. 1, 1999.

David and **Joyce Murchie**, Japan, seven months, Aug. 1, 1998.

Elizabeth Myer, Haiti, one month, June 1, 1998.

David and **Roxi Owen**, Lesotho, three months, Oct. 1, 1999.

John and **Tamara Nichols Rodenberg**, Swaziland, four months, April 1, 1999.

From the WCC . . .

A 34-minute video, *Staying Together*, which traces how the churches in the World Council of Churches work together, is available from the U.S. Office of the WCC at 475 Riverside Drive, Room 900, New York, NY 10115, for $8 each (includes shipping/handling). It can also be ordered by fax, 212/870-2528, or email, <worldcoun@aol.com>.

"We intend to stay together" was the pledge made by churches around the world in 1948 when, in the aftermath of WWII, they established the WCC as an expression of Christian cooperation and unity.

From the Africa Office . . .

The Global Ministries Africa Office has produced *Ukaama: The Church in Solidarity With Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe*, a 34-minute video on the struggle of gays and lesbians in that country. It is available free from the Africa Office, P.O. Box 1986, Indianapolis, IN 46206, email <psanborn@dom.disciples.org>.

The video deals with the violent state of homophobia in Zimbabwe and includes comments from Rodgers Bande and Keith Goddard of the organization Gays and Lesbians of Zimbabwe, who visited the Africa Office early this year and were interviewed by Africa executive Daniel Hoffman.

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Hurricane Georges damage on Puerto Rico was far more serious than first believed, with damages now estimated at $2 billion. Here, Puerto Rico UCC Conference Minister the Rev. Osvaldo Malave and Sigfredo Gonzalez (l), president of the UCC church in the city of Caugues, inspect damages. Some 126 UCC families in Puerto Rico were affected and eight UCC churches suffered damage up to $200,000. All the churches that lost their buildings were constructed of wood; however, insurance companies do not cover wooden buildings in Puerto Rico. A UCC-supported AIDS hospice lost its building and contents. There are estimated to be 70,000 people in need of psychological help as a result of the storm. Damage was reported in every city on the island. Power remains out in many communities, even in the capital of San Juan, and is expected to be out for as long as eight months in some areas.

Georges response prompts thanks

When Hurricane Georges hit the Caribbean and Southeastern U.S., your One Great Hour of Sharing funds enabled us to help. Following is the OGHS UCC response to date—

Florida Conference hurricane relief, $5,000; Puerto Rico Conference for generators, $10,000, and for the Association of Families and Friends of AIDS patients which sustained major damage, $2,500; Division of Overseas Ministries of the Disciples for hurricane assistance, $5,000; and Church World Service, $5,000.

If you want to help in the Caribbean, there are two ways: 1) Send gifts made out to your Conference designated "Hurricane Georges" to your Conference with a request they be forwarded to the Office for Global Sharing of Resources, UCBWM, 475 Riverside Dr., 16th Fl., New York, NY 10115. 2) Assemble "Gifts of the Heart" clean-up and health kits. See our website <www.ucc.org/global/disaster/> or call 212/870-2283 for kit contents and shipping instructions.

If you want to help in Florida, there are also two ways: 1) Send gifts made out to your Conference and designated "Tropical Storms/Floods 1998," to your Conference with a request they be forwarded to the aforementioned address. It has been decided that Florida's needs from Georges will be covered under the previous appeal for "Tropical Storms/Floods 1998." 2) Assemble "Gifts of the Heart" kits using the same instructions as above.